

Testimony

A Pamphlet from Pax Christi San Antonio

Anticipating November 26, 2017

Pax Christi San Antonio does not solicit donations; however, anyone wishing to join should make a donation to Pax Christi U.S.A. and notify Maria Tobin, matob@aol.com, to receive email messages sent to members. Pax Christi International was founded in 1945 with the encouragement of Bishop Pierre Marie Théas of Montauban, France, by Marthe Dortel Claudot, as a Christian lay organization dedicated to preventing a repetition of the savagery of the twentieth century's world wars. Send comments on the newsletter to J6anthonyblasi@yahoo.com.

Editorial

After the calendar, the *Third Reading* commentary is based on the gospel reading for the Solemnity of Christ the King. We have two poems this week. Tom Keene's poem is *The Man Misunderstood*. See <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php> for more of Tom's poems. Lois Heger's poem, which is particularly timely, is *They Finally Believed One*. An October 11 blog posting from the Pax Christi USA webpage follows, describing and advocating bills that have been introduced into Congress to restrict the president's ability to resort to nuclear weapons.

The Alamo Area Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist is a volunteer organization that provides training for the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the local area's indigenous plants, animals, and geological features. Registration and orientation for the spring 2019 training is February 22, with classes beginning March 1; further information and applications are at txmn.org/Alamo.

Calendar

Thursday November 23, 9:30am-10:30am, One Day. One Hour. One People. Gathered in Gratitude. House of Prayer Lutheran Church, 10236 Ironside. Sponsored by Compassionate San Antonio.

Tuesday November 28, 6:00pm-8:00pm, "It's Not on MY Map: A Panel Discussion on Equity Impacts in SA." Diego Bernal, Pattie Radle, Queta Rodriguez, Richard Montez, Matthew Martinez, covering ZIP codes 78207, 78237, 78202, 78203. YWCA, 503 Castroville Rd. Extra parking at Las Palmas Library, next door.

Tuesday November 28, 6:30pm-9:00pm, Robert Rico, MPA and Sofia Bahena, Ed.D., Restorative Justice: An Alternative to disciplinary Policies in Our Schools. Martinez Street Women's Center, 801 Olive St.

Wednesday November 29, 2:00pm-4:00pm, video, *Written on Water*, on the tension between property rights and state-mandated pumping limits in west Texas. Mabee Library Room 221, University of the Incarnate Word, 4301 Broadway.

Thursday November 30, 6:00pm, UTSA Social Work, "Through the Lens: End Rape Culture." San Antonio Central Library, 600 Soledad.

Saturday December 2, 10:00am, Pax Christi San Antonio meeting. Residence of Maria Tobin, 8715 Starcrest Dr., #27. (Go north on Starcrest from I-410; Starcrest becomes a divided road. The apartment complex is located between Hidden Drive and Granby Court, on the south-bound side of Starcrest. (It is possible to park at a church across the street.)

Monday December 4, 3:30pm, video, "In the Light of Reverence," documenting obstacles to religious freedom of land-based practitioners: Lakota at Devil's tower, Hopi in the Four Corners area, and the Wintu at Mt. Shasta. Christus Heritage hall, The Village at Incarnate Word, 4707 Broadway.

Monday December 4, 7:00pm, Tyrone B. Hayes, Ph.D., "From Silent Spring to Silent Night: A Tale of Toads and Men," discussing research that became the basis of a class action law suit against Syngenta, the Swiss manufacturer of atrazine. Laurie Auditorium, Trinity University, One Trinity Place.

Third Reading (Matthew 25:31-46.)

"Christ died outside the walls as he was born outside the walls. If we are to see the light, the sun, of Easter, we ourselves must go outside the walls." "I am not here to convince the convinced or take care of the well. I'm here to support the ill and offer a hand to the lost. Does a bishop remain in his cathedral or does he go into the street? ... I made my choice." So said Jacques Gaillot after he was ordained bishop of Évreaux, France. Acting on his conviction, he proceeded to repeatedly upset the "restorationist" Pope John Paul II. For example, he supported a conscientious objector to military service and opposed an episcopal document supporting the French possession of the nuclear bomb (1983). He declined to defend parochial schools (1984) and supported the first Palestinian Intifada (1985). In the same year he signed an appeal on behalf of underpaid Catholic school teachers, along with the French Communist leader Georges Marchais. He spoke out for disarmament at the United Nations (1987). Also in 1987 he went to South Africa to meet a young anti-apartheid militant who had been imprisoned, rather than participate in an annual Lourdes pilgrimage. The next year he advocated the ordination of married men and defended the use of condoms, and blessed a homosexual marriage. 1989 found him in a protest against nuclear weapons testing in French Polynesia. The French church establishment proceeded to attack him publicly, while some spread rumors about his character. This led to something of a public controversy between him and most of the French hierarchy. On January 13, 1995, Pope John Paul II removed Bishop Gaillot from Évreaux by transferring him to the no longer

existing see of Parthenia, in antiquity a diocese in what is now Algeria—in fact where the young Jacques Gaillot once served as a draftee in the French military.

Why mention the controversies that surrounded the Bishop of Évreaux in connection with the reading, the well-known 25th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew (...when you did it to the least...)? It is Bishop Gaillot's conviction that he should "go into the street." After being removed from the Évreaux Diocese he moved in with illegal squatters in Paris. His new fictive diocese, Partenia, had no borders; and he saw that as an opportunity to be a bishop for the excluded.

Bishop Gaillot went to the Call to Acton conference in Detroit, Michigan, in 1995, as a keynote speaker. There I heard him describe how he and his fellow squatters (most of them Muslim descendants of illegal immigrants, the descendants having lost retroactively, by a government action, their rights to own homes or receive government benefits) moved out of an unheated abandoned railroad station in winter and into the parish church of St. Ambrose in Paris—after all St. Ambrose was the patron saint of the poor. The congregation welcomed them, housed them in the church, fed them, kept them warm. Before a nativity scene settled a young family. Before the Eucharistic table a food service was set up. As the government assembled an armed force to invade the church, a collection of well-known personages—singers, comedians, movie stars, even intellectuals—surrounded the church and linked arms. A standoff endured for some weeks. The government finally forced its way into the church in the dark of an early morn. "Whatever you do to the least...."

Today one may find the Partenia website with many of bishop Gaillot's homilies, but with no recent updates: www.partenia.org/english/patenia_eng.htm

The bishop met with Pope Francis in September 2015, who, it is said, encouraged him to continue his advocacy for migrants and refugees.

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Poems

The Man Misunderstood

"Don't *cling* to me,"
I am said to have said
to Mary, my friend.
I had to go.
Unless I did,
you wouldn't get
the spirit of it all.
You wouldn't get
the whole point of my life,
or of yours.

So surrender forever
the notion you can own me.

It is enough to remember me
with wine and bread,
where you can taste
the blood-spurting, fleshy
meanings of me.

And please don't reduce me to doctrine
or trivialize me with comfy feelings.
If you want God's kingdom,
dump your images of kings.
If you want God's peace,
let go the hope that war will bring it.

If mythologize me you must,
let the myths *be* myths,
doors to the Unknown.
Don't bury my meanings
in tombs of words taken literally.
If you would explain me with words,
let them be lyrics to music.

So don't cling.
If you want to meet me, feed the hungry,
free the prisoners, touch your enemies with love.
Such are the real presences
where universal compassion abides,
and I wait for you.

Tom Keene February 26, 2008

They Finally Believed One

We knew.
The "me too" knew.
That's the way it happens.
That's why we don't tell.
That's how it feels.
Spoiled.
No longer good.

We did what we could.
Warned, whispered
hung together so others
wouldn't get spoiled.

All we could do
when no one believed.
Yet some slipped through.
And mothers read their notes
after it was too late.
When they could no longer tolerate
that feeling of being spoiled.
And death was the only relief.
Because they knew they brought it on themselves.
If only they hadn't worn that skirt
or smiled
or believed he was only being friendly.

They finally believed one.
But you know it causes a lot of trouble.
So much easier to let it slide they say.
Time has passed they say.
Can't you move on?
But we know
the "me too" know about trouble
and it's not because of a smile.
It's his trouble now.

Lois Heger, November 10, 2017

Lieu-Markey Bill Restricts President's Authority to Push Nuclear Button

Nicholas Mele

October 11, 2017 paxchristiusa Blog

The awarding of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons and the continued progress of the Treaty to Ban Nuclear Weapons on its way to come into force as international law are hopeful developments. Even so, the refusal of the nuclear weapons states, led by the U.S., is discouraging. Furthermore, for some time now, President Trump and North Korea's supreme leader, Kim Jong Un have been trading threats. Because both nations have atomic weapons, many people are expressing concern about nuclear war for the first time since the end of the Cold War nearly thirty years ago. One aspect that keeps being discussed, the U.S. procedure for ordering a nuclear strike, may also become a movement forward.

The current nuclear protocol puts the decision and the sole authority to launch nuclear weapons on the shoulders of the U.S. president. The president is required to talk with two high-ranking military leaders, the Pentagon's deputy director of operations and the commander of the Strategic Command. The former runs the Pentagon operations center, also known as its war room, and the latter is at the top of the chain of

command which controls the entire U.S. nuclear arsenal and the planes, missile silos and submarines from which nuclear strikes would be launched. However, the current protocol simply requires the president to speak with these two generals. They have no authority to overrule him; if they resist an order to attack, they can be dismissed on the spot and replaced with more amenable successors. The entire process enables the president to launch the U.S. nuclear arsenal in ten minutes or less.

This concentration of power in the president is an anomaly in a political system based on an inherent distrust of concentrated power of any kind, hence the checks and balances built in to the U.S. Constitution. After the Cuban Missile Crisis, President John F. Kennedy felt the then-current launch protocols needed to be revised; the result was the procedure outlines in the previous paragraph. Since 1962, much has changed, including the nature of the threat posed by nuclear weapons, but the attack authorization process has remained the same. For these reasons, two elected officials, Representative Ted Lieu (D) of Los Angeles and Senator Edward Markey (D) of Massachusetts, introduced the *Restricting First Use of Nuclear Weapons Act* to their respective chambers of Congress earlier this year. Although both the House and Senate versions of the bill have attracted co-sponsors, only one of the 53 House co-sponsors is a Republican. Eight Senators co-sponsoring the bill are Democrats, and the ninth Senate co-sponsor is independent Senator Bernie Sanders.

Essentially, the bill would prohibit the president from ordering a nuclear attack, except in the case of another nation already attacking the United States, without a declaration of war by Congress. The bill requires U.S. nuclear launch procedures to conform to the U.S. Constitution which specifies that Congress, not the president, has the sole power to declare war. It is a shame, then, that so few Senators and Representatives have signed on to the identical Senate and House bills. Clearly, U.S. citizens concerned about the president's ability to launch a nuclear attack on any other nation can make a difference by asking their Representative and Senators to co-sponsor and support the *Restricting First Use of Nuclear Weapons Act*.

Links

Pax Christi International
<http://www.paxchristi.net/>

Pax Christi U.S.A.
<http://www.paxchristiusa.org>

Pax Christi Texas
<http://www.paxchristitexas.org>

Pax Christi San Antonio
<http://www.paxchristisa.org>

COPS / Metro Alliance
www.copsmetro.com/

Marianist Social Justice Collaborative
www.msjc.net

Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, International JPIC Committee
<http://saccvi.blogspot.com/>

San Antonio Peace Center
<http://www.sanantoniopace.center>

Interfaith Radio, (*Interfaith Voices*)
<http://www.interfaithradio.org/>

Texas Catholic Campaign to End the Death Penalty
www.txccedp.org